



Photos courtesy of Brandon Payne Photography

# TRAVEL UPDATE

O C T O B E R 2 0 0 8

A Utah Department of Administrative Services, Division of Finance quarterly communication service

[www.finance.utah.gov](http://www.finance.utah.gov)

## On-line Reservation Request Form

We are happy to announce that the online reservation request form is now operational. Just go to the travel web site [www.finance.utah.gov/travel](http://www.finance.utah.gov/travel) and click on the “reservation request form” link. Utilizing this form will ensure that the agents will receive all of the information they need to book your travel efficiently and accurately.

CHRISTOPHERSON  
BUSINESS TRAVEL  
A CHRISTOPHERSON COMPANY

State of Utah - Send Travel Request to My Agent

**STATE OF UTAH - SEND TRAVEL REQUEST TO MY AGENT**

Thank you for using our web Reservation Request.  
Please have your reservation request to us by 3 p.m.

- Since our jobs require us to constantly be on the phone, it is difficult to get through without leaving voice mail.
- Reservation Requests made through this web form will produce a response via email to the requester within 4 business hours. We will make every effort to answer all requests by the end of the day, but requests should be submitted by 3pm.

\*\*\*All fares are not guaranteed until confirmed\*\*\*

\*\* Indicates a required field.

Preferred Agent:

**Contact Information**

- \* First Name:
- \* Last Name:
- \* E-mail Address:
- CC E-mail:
- \* Phone Number:

**Traveler Information**

Online Reservation Request Form

Quarterly Travel Training

Travel Policy & Procedure FAQs

State of Utah Hotel Policy

State Travel Office or Internet?

Word From Our Contracted Agency

Green Up Your Business Travel

Who's Who in the State Travel Office

## Quarterly Travel Training Now Available

The State Travel Office is pleased to announce that training is now available to all individuals involved in the booking of travel for the state. Classes will be held quarterly and are designed to provide procedural guidelines for beginning as well as experienced travel planners. A thorough examination of policies and procedures related to the booking of business travel on behalf of State of Utah travelers will be covered. In addition, rules and regulations governing each general travel expense type will be discussed in depth. The intent of this class is to help department personnel better understand state travel policies and increase their efficiency in the management of their travel activities.

### Upcoming Classes

- January 6, 2009
- April 7, 2009
- June 2, 2009

Each class will be held in the State Office Building Auditorium. You may register for these classes by going to the State Travel web site at [www.finance.utah.gov/travel](http://www.finance.utah.gov/travel) and clicking on the “Travel Training” link. For more information, you may visit our website or contact Tami Nelson at 538-3109.

# Travel Policy and Procedure FAQs

by Tami Nelson



**Q.**

Who do I contact at State travel to make/change a reservation and also for questions on group gatherings, travel policies, forms, etc.?

**A.**

If you need assistance with reservations for any aspect of travel, please contact one of our six contracted travel agents for assistance with your travel needs.

If you have any questions about group gatherings, travel policy, travel related forms, drive vs. fly comparison's....please contact either Tami Nelson or Kevin Lucus in the State Travel Office.

You will find all of the contact information on the last page of this newsletter and on the travel web page [www.finance.utah.gov/travel](http://www.finance.utah.gov/travel). Just click on the "who to call" link.

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## State of Utah Hotel Policy

Please be aware that the travel policy requires that all hotel reservations be booked through the State Travel Office. There are two exceptions to this policy; conference hotels and in-state hotels. Travelers are allowed to make reservations at a conference hotel, however, we recommend still working with our contracted travel agency to ensure that you are getting the best rate possible for your hotel stay. Many times, the agents are able to get rates lower than the conference rate.



For in-state hotels, travelers/travel coordinators are allowed to make reservations on their own - as long as they are within the state lodging per diem limits. If the traveler/travel coordinator makes a reservation on their own and the rate is above the allowable state lodging per diem limit, they will only be reimbursed at the state lodging per diem rate. If the traveler is unable to obtain the state lodging per diem rate, they must call State Travel to book the reservation. The agents will search for the state lodging per diem rate and if they are not able to find a room within that rate, will book the best rate possible. If the traveler has an itinerary from State Travel then they will get reimbursed the rate listed on that itinerary. Exceptions will be allowed for unusual circumstances when approved in writing by the traveler's/travel coordinator's Executive Director or designee prior to the trip.

Our contracted travel agents are able to book in-state and out-of-state hotel reservations at, and often times below, the state lodging per diem limits. Please take the time to utilize their expertise.

We strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the current state lodging per diem limits. The base maximum in-state lodging per diem rate is \$65 per night plus tax, although varying higher rates have been approved for many cities throughout the state. You will find a complete listing of the state lodging per diem limits by visiting the travel web page [www.finance.utah.gov/travel](http://www.finance.utah.gov/travel) and clicking on the "State Policies & Procedures" link.

Please contact Tami Nelson or Kevin Lucus with questions in regards to this or any other travel policy.

## State Travel Office or Internet?

The use of the State Travel Office is required by state policy FIACCT 10-02.00. The following article provides some independent support for this practice.

Since 2001, Topaz International has conducted comparative studies of corporate travel airfares between actual corporate travel agency booked itineraries and various public internet sites, including Orbitz, Expedia, Travelocity and airline direct websites. During the most recent results from 2007, Topaz found that business travel itineraries booked by a designated corporate travel agency averaged \$56 less than the same itinerary booked on a public internet site.

### Business Travel Comparisons

	Agency Fare Equal or Lower	Agency Fare Higher	Average Agency Fare	Average Internet Fare	Difference
2001	93.26%	6.74%	\$458	\$629	\$171
2002	91.13%	8.87%	\$594	\$748	\$154
2003	91.02%	8.98%	\$503	\$572	\$69
2004	93.57%	6.43%	\$478	\$558	\$80
2005	93.29%	6.71%	\$427	\$483	\$56
2006	94.03%	5.97%	\$508	\$583	\$75
2007	94.85%	5.15%	\$442	\$498	\$56



“What does this all mean and is it really relevant in our marketplace” said Bradley Seitz, President and CEO of Topaz International. “The ongoing game of finding the lowest airfares continues to be a major focus of travel managers all over the globe. They are demanding services that will find the lowest fares for their corporate travelers, and if the travel management companies do not find them, the travelers certainly will. Distribution of all travel products continues to be fragmented and a great cause for headaches all over the world. Full content is not full content, availability is not consistent, and as I have said in the past, the overriding desire of the airlines is to control and price their product where they can obtain the most value.”

“The complexity of our business remains to this day. These studies continue to show that while the differences are less than in the past, they still exist and it should be the goal of all leaders to have processes in place to locate and book the lowest alternatives, and validate that their service providers are giving the levels of contracted offerings that have been agreed to.”

*(Information from this article was extracted from a press release by Topaz International, March 20, 2008.)*





Denise Francis, CBT Team Leader

## Word From Our Contracted Travel Agency

*Extracted from an article first appearing on msnbc.nbc.com. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26776308/>*

These days the majority of airlines are tacking on many fees to their airfares. The one in the spotlight lately has been the baggage fees. Here are some great ideas to minimize these fees. If you have questions on these or any other fees the airlines charge, please feel free to contact me at (801)-538-3358 or [dfrancis@utah.gov](mailto:dfrancis@utah.gov).

### 1. Carry on to put fees in check

The most common-sense solution for avoiding checked baggage fees is to simply not check your bags. With American, Continental, Northwest, United, US Airways, Frontier, and Spirit now charging \$15 for a first checked bag (and most legacy and budget airlines charging around \$25 for the second one checked) on *each* leg of a flight, it just makes (dollars and) sense to carry on. Invest in a strong, yet lightweight bag that's in accordance with the bulk of airlines' carry-on allowances (check individual airline Web sites for details as sizes do vary) and reusable toiletries containers (sized under the TSA's mandated maximum of three ounces) and leave worries of lost luggage, hefty additional fees, and long waits at ticket counters (and carousels) for checked bags — behind.

### 2. If you must check bags, check wisely

The steepest checked baggage fees are tacked onto bags that are overweight (usually above 50 pounds) or oversized (from 62 inches). So while it may at first seem logical to try to cram everything into one bag instead of using two, know that while a first checked bag won't set you back more than \$15 on any airline, if it ends up being oversized or overweight it can cost anywhere from \$29 (AirTran) to \$175 (Delta, for over 70 pounds). Considering second checked bag fees hover around \$25 on most airlines (bringing the average total for two checked bags to about \$40), it's near-always the more economical option to check two bags than to go overboard on one.

### 3. Join the club

Several airlines — including United, American, and Continental — will waive baggage fees if you are an elite member of their frequent flyer program. Remember to sign up for your carrier's frequent flyer program before booking your flight to start accruing points, and if you are already a member of a program, keep in mind that loyalty to them might very well pay off in the long run.



# Green Up Your Business Travel



Whether you dread it or don't mind living out of your suitcase on occasion, business travel is a fact of life for many. In the spirit of the State's energy efficiency efforts, here are some suggestions to green up your business or personal travel. Please be aware, however, that our contracts with the airlines and rental car companies are still a priority and must be utilized.

## **Use teleconferencing services**

Meet green by choosing remote collaboration methods via phone, video, and online.

## **Fly airlines with eco-friendly policies**

From recycling to carbon offsets some airlines are promoting policies that mitigate air travel's environmental impacts. Find out if your frequent flyer miles are flying green.

## **Choose a green hotel**

Leverage your green business muscle when choosing corporate hotel partners. Gauge their eco-commitment and make it known that green matters to you and your employees.

## **Drive a green rental car**

Think green and fuel-efficient the next time you're at the rental counter.

## **Take public transportation**

Opting for public transit instead of short-distance solo business driving means more passengers per vehicle and a smaller eco-travel print.

## **Walk or ride your bike**

Next time you meet clients for lunch or attend an off-site meeting, choose to self-propel. You'll enjoy the exercise, without gym fees, and reduce carbon emissions, too.

## **Save energy at home while you travel**

If you're leaving behind an empty home, remember to unplug!

## Who's Who in the State Travel Office

**Tami Nelson** (State Employee)  
State Travel Manager  
801-538-3109  
taminelson@utah.gov

**Lanea Blosser**  
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel  
801-538-3103  
lblosser@utah.gov

**Kevin Lucas** (State Employee)  
State Travel Coordinator  
801-538-3357  
klucas@utah.gov

**Katina Terry**  
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel  
801-538-3359  
kterry@utah.gov

**Denise Francis**  
Team Leader, Christopherson Travel  
801-538-3358  
dfrancis@utah.gov

**Diane Hawkes**  
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel  
801-538-3351  
dhawkes@utah.gov

**Renee Craig-Jennett**  
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel  
801-538-3743  
rjennett@utah.gov

**Tiffany Snowball**  
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel  
801-538-3352  
tsnowball@utah.gov

## HELP!

*Emergency Line During Business Hours, 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday*

**801-537-9124**

*In-State Toll Free During Business Hours, 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday*

**866-489-9834**

*After Hours Emergency Hotline*

**800-358-1019**